

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 3, 6-8, and 12-16 without prejudice or disclaimer of the underlying subject matter and amend claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 9-11 as set forth below.

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1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An authentication system used when stored information is manipulated, comprising:

- a host computer comprising:
- input means for inputting a user's instruction;
- command output means for generating from the user's instruction an instruction command which requests a predetermined processing to be executed and for outputting ~~it the instruction command~~; and
- communication means for communicating with an external unit; and
- a fingerprint identification apparatus comprising:
- communication means for communicating with said host computer;
- processing control means for executing a predetermined processing according to the instruction command input from said host computer by said communication means;
- fingerprint detection means for detecting a fingerprint and for generating fingerprint data;
- storage-information recording means for recording the fingerprint data and storage information related to the fingerprint data; and
- fingerprint identification means for verifying fingerprint data detected by said fingerprint detection means with the fingerprint data recorded by said storage-information recording means,

wherein said storage-information recording means stores a private key generated by the public-key encryption method, and

wherein the user's instruction is one of a decryption of an encrypted text and an encryption of plain text, and the user's instruction is sent to the host computer through communication cable.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An The authentication system according to Claim 1, wherein said storage-information recording means allows recorded storage information to be accessed only once immediately after the fingerprint-identification result is affirmative.

3. (CANCELED).

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An The authentication system according to Claim 1, wherein said fingerprint identification apparatus further comprises encryption processing means for generating an encryption key, for performing encryption by the use of the encryption key, and for performing decryption.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An The authentication system according to Claim 4, wherein said encryption processing means generates a public key and a private key according to the public-key encryption method, and decrypts an encrypted text by the use of the private key, wherein the encrypted text is received from the host computer and decrypted plain text is sent to the host computer.

6. - 8. (CANCELED).

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An authentication method used when stored information is manipulated, comprising the steps of:

    a host computer informing a user of a fingerprint-identification request according to a user's instruction and issuing a fingerprint-identification instruction command to a fingerprint identification apparatus;

    the fingerprint identification apparatus reading a fingerprint after the user places a finger on the fingerprint identification apparatus, verifying the read fingerprint with a stored fingerprint, and sending a fingerprint-identification result to the host computer;

    the host computer allowing the user to specify the next instruction when the result is affirmative, and issuing the instruction command corresponding to the next instruction; and

    the fingerprint identification apparatus accessing storage information according to the instruction command and executing a predetermined processing,

wherein said storage-information recording means stores a private key generated by the public-key encryption method, and

wherein the user's instruction is one of a decryption of an encrypted text and an encryption of plain text, and the user's instruction is sent to the host computer through communication cable.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~An~~The authentication method according to Claim 9, wherein, in the step of the fingerprint identification apparatus accessing the storage information according to the instruction command and executing a predetermined processing, the storage information is allowed to be accessed only once immediately after the fingerprint-identification result is affirmative.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~An~~The authentication method according to Claim 9, wherein the storage information includes a private key generated by the public-key encryption method, and in the step of the fingerprint identification apparatus accessing the storage information according to the instruction command and executing a predetermined processing, a predetermined encrypted text is decrypted by the use of the private key, wherein the encrypted text is received from the host computer and decrypted plain text is sent to the host computer.

12. - 16. (CANCELED).